

## EMPLOYEE NEWS

**Brett Gurney** is Regulatory Services' new **Supervisor** of the **Weights and Measures** Program. Brett has been employed by the division since 1994. **Clint Burfitt** is Plant Industry's new **Agricultural Tech II**. He was previously employed at Brighton Ski Resort. **Robert Hougaard** is Plant Industry's new **Field Representative**. He previously worked as a Textbook Operations Manager at the Utah State University Bookstore. **Kay Brown** is Animal Industry's new **Fish Health Secretary**. She previously worked as a payroll clerk for Granite Furniture Company. **Cheryl Morrison** is Administrative Service's new **receptionist**. She was previously employed in data entry at Lab Corp.

**Carol Griffin**, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, has been elected **President Elect** of the Utah Chapter of the International Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS). She will take over as President at the chapter's annual meeting in January of 2001.

## COMPENSATION FOR 2000

The Utah Legislature funded a 4 per cent cost of living salary increase for state employees. There will be a 5 per cent increase in premium costs on Preferred Care coverage under PEHP medical plan. Under the change, expect to pay about \$13.00 per pay period for family coverage. Two party coverage will increase by about \$9.74, and single coverage will increase about \$4.75 per pay period. Co-payments are to increase by \$5.00.

## NEW EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE FORMED

By: Jack Wilbur

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food's employee committee has a new name and new direction.

At the suggestion of Commissioner Peterson, the committee chose the name "Ag Employee Service Committee." The idea is to take some of the focus off of fund-raising and package the committee more as an employee service-oriented group.

The committee will try to get a better return on fund-raising efforts and reduce the number of hours the committee members are away from work. "For example, we will probably continue selling the Papa Murphey's pizza cards and Kara chocolates because they have a good finan-

## AFRICANIZED (KILLER) BEE TRAPS GOING UP IN S.UTAH

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) field agents placed 75 Africanized honey-bee traps in Southern Utah in an attempt to detect the presence of the bee. This is the trapping program's sixth year. No Africanized bees have been detected.

State Entomologist, Ed Bianco, is cautioning Utahns, especially in Southern Utah, that Africanized honeybees may be in our state this year. The bees are responsible for the stinging attack in Mesquite in October of 1999 when a city worker was stung 17 times. Bianco says that it is reasonable to expect that the bees might migrate to Utah soon.

Since November, the UDAF has responded to

*Department Field Inspector Rod Campbell, places one of 75 Africanized bee traps near homes in St. George.*



cial return with little time commitment," said Jack Wilbur, this year's committee chair.

The committee is also considering using a soda pop and snack vendor that returns more revenue to the department. The committee also wants to place an aluminum can crusher and receptacle in the main conference room.

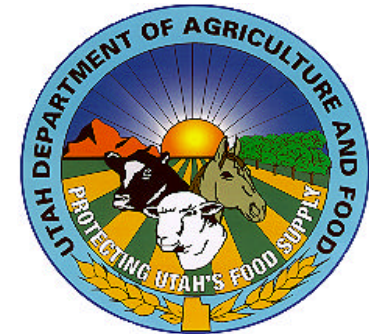
The committee meets in April to determine a date for the Summer Social.

Other members of the Ag Employee Service Committee members are; Jack Small, Animal Health; Barr Christensen, Chemistry; Liza Layne, Plan Industry; Dan Palacios, Admin. Services; and Brett Gurney, Regulatory Services. If you have any questions or comments,

# UTAH AG NEWS

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## on the Web



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE  
AND FOOD

# DR. SEUSS HELPS UTAH SCHOOL CHILDREN CONSERVE FARMLAND DURING NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

Worksheet Available For Downloading At  
[www.ag.state.ut.us/](http://www.ag.state.ut.us/)

Dr. Seuss's classic story of The Lorax is helping Utah elementary school students learn about protecting valuable farm and ranch land during National Agriculture Day, March 20, 2000. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) distributed the colorful worksheet to 10,000 second,



**The Lorax**

third and fourth grade Agriculture-In-The-Classroom students and teachers throughout Utah. The worksheet is available to the public to reprint by visiting the department website:  
[www.ag.state.ut.us/](http://www.ag.state.ut.us/)

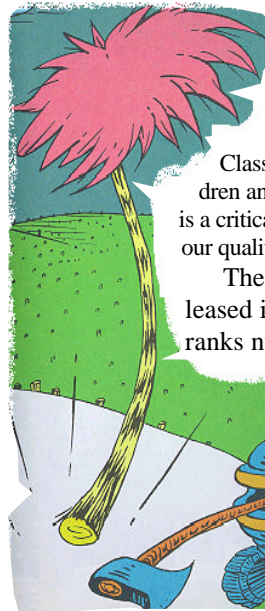
Agriculture-In-The-Classroom is a statewide program that is educating students and teachers about the economic and environmental importance of Utah agriculture.

The "Lorax" worksheet uses the colorful Dr. Seuss story of The Lorax and Once-ler to encourage students to appreciate the environment and our natural resources. After reading about the Lorax, students are asked to answer questions about Utah farms and agriculture.

"The worksheet is presented very colorfully and in a way that will capture the children's attention," said Judy Beatty, Backman Elementary School teacher. "The worksheet is a good connection with the kids' understanding of our environment, and it is a good transition from the Lorax book to real life," she added.

## Loss Of Utah Land

"Utah is losing more than 20,000 acres of farmland a year, and



we are the second fastest growing state in the country for new housing units," said Cary G. Peterson, Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food. "Our Agriculture-In-The-

Classroom efforts are intended to teach children and adults that Utah farm and ranch land is a critical resource that greatly contributes to our quality of life," Peterson added.

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released information showing that Utah ranks number 2 in the nation for new housing units. We grew by 22.1 percent in the 90's. Nevada is ranked number one at 49 percent.

*The UDAF worksheet uses the Dr. Seuss story of The Lorax, to teach the concept of farmland conservation. The vivid colors and classic artwork of Dr. Seuss made it fun to learn about conserving our natural resources.*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that during the 1990's the nation lost an average of 3 million acres of private farmland a year to development, that is twice the annual rate during the previous 10 years. The USDA also says Utah's loss of farmland during the 1990's was 20,000 acres per year, double the rate of the previous decade.

For more information on Utah farmland visit the

**Saving Farmland** page at the UDAF website:  
[www.ag.state.ut.us/](http://www.ag.state.ut.us/)



# DEER AND ELK TEST SHOWS NO CHRONIC WASTING IN UTAH

Utah's most comprehensive test for the wildlife disease chronic wasting disease (CWD) turned up no trace of the disease in hundreds of animals tested. The study was part of a four-state effort that tested 1,472 deer and elk in Utah, Maine, South Dakota, and Oklahoma. The results showed no CWD in any of the states. In Utah, 600 deer and elk were tested—404 deer and 196 elk. This was the second CWD test in Utah. In 1998 156 deer and elk were tested, none showed signs of CWD.

The tests were conducted by the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) in response to claims that three wildlife hunters in Utah, Maine and Oklahoma died from a disease that was transmitted by CWD infected deer and elk. The three hunters died of the degenerative nerve disease Creutzfeld-Jakob disease (CJD). CWD has not been found in wild elk outside a nine county area of Southeast Wyoming and Northeast Colorado.

"These test results should lay to rest any notion that the Utah wildlife hunter died from his contact with Utah deer and elk," said Dr. Michael R. Marshall, State Veterinarian. "There are very few deer and elk in the entire country that are infected with CWD, and furthermore there is no connection between CWD in wildlife and CJD in humans," Marshall added.

CWD and CJD produce similar symptoms in animals and humans but are considered separate diseases. Both are forms of spongiform encephalopathy that produces vacuoles or holes in the brain.

Of the 1,472 animals tested, 600 were from Utah. In Maine 299 animals were tested, all were deer. In South Dakota 435 animals were tested, 209 were elk, 226 were deer. In Oklahoma 138 animals were tested, all were deer.

The 1999 test was conducted by the UDAF and submitted to the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa. It was conducted in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control, the Utah Department of Health, the Utah Department of Natural Resources, and other states' agencies.